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ACTION EUR-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AID-00	AMAD-00	USNW-00	CIAE-00	INL-00
	DODE-00	DOFE-00	PERC-00	DS-00	EAP-00	EB-00	OIGO-00
	FAAE-00	FBIE-00	VC-00	H-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00
	LAB-01	L-00	VCE-00	DCP-00	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OMB-00
	NIMA-00	PA-00	PM-00	GIWI-00	SCT-00	FMPC-00	SP-00
	IRM-00	SSO-00	SS-00	R-00	EPAE-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00
	PRM-00	DRL-00	G-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00	SWCI-00	/001W

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O 201550Z JUL 05
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1094
INFO EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
AMCONSUL FLORENCE PRIORITY
AMCONSUL MILAN PRIORITY
AMCONSUL NAPLES PRIORITY

RELEASED IN PART
B1, 1.4(B), 1.4(D)

S E C R E T ROME 002422

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/12/2015
TAGS: PREL, PGOV, PTER, IT
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S END OF TOUR ASSESSMENT: U.S.-ITALY
RELATIONS

Classified By: Ambassador Mel Sembler, for reasons 1.4 (b) (d)

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COMPLICATING FACTORS

5. (U) However, there are factors on the horizon that will complicate our future relationship.

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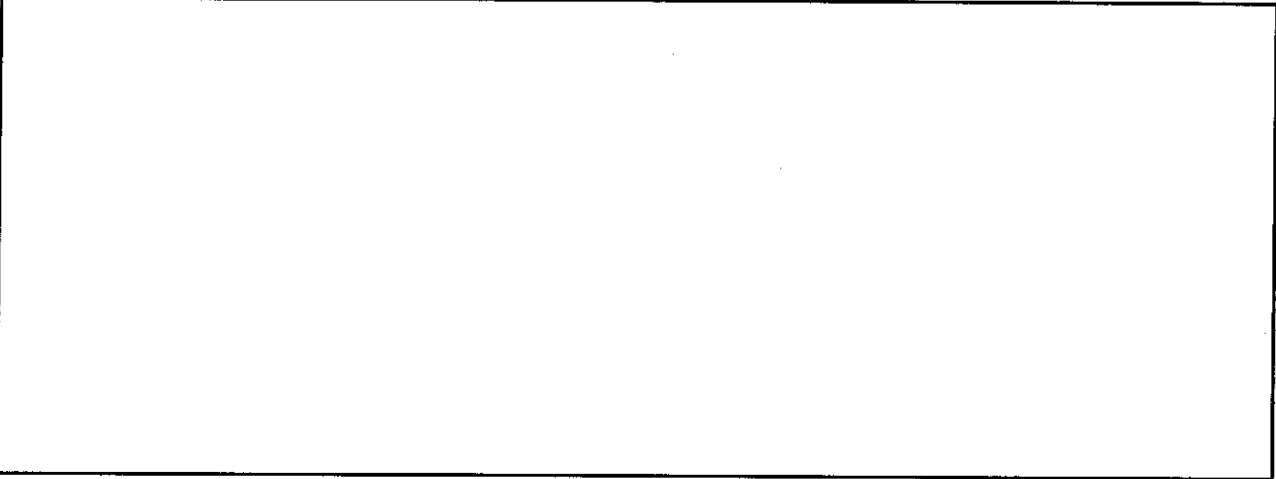
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--Public Opinion

13. (U) As we approach the 2006 elections, the government will grow more and more sensitive to public opinion. A June 2004 poll showed that 57 percent of Italians view America positively, and I have benefited during my tenure from that goodwill. However, public opinion remains extremely negative toward Italian involvement in Iraq. A February 2005 poll revealed that Italians oppose the presence of Italian troops in Iraq by 53 to 28 percent; in March, 47 percent supported the withdrawal of Italian troops. The Calipari shooting (74 percent of Italians polled in May wanted a more reliable report on the investigation) and the alleged rendition of Imam Hassan Mustafa Osama Nasr (aka Abu Omar) further eroded public support on Iraq. Additionally, public opinion remains strongly negative toward capital punishment and genetically modified crops. On the positive side, Italians continue to support their peacekeeping missions in Afghanistan and the Balkans.



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20. (U) Government cooperation to implement U.S.-mandated biometric passports reflects Italian pride in being able to travel to the U.S. without a visa. If newly imposed requirements for digital photos in all passports issued after October 25, 2005 (that current Italian passports do not have) are implemented, this will greatly increase the mission's visa workload, create significant confusion for travelers and generate negative publicity for the U.S.

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